Secrt. IT-27—100,000—21-6-51.

Development (1951) Department

MS SERIES.

G.O. No. 4174

Dated 19. 9. 51

[Despatch Abstract.]

Agricultural Labour — Reorganisation of — Draft outline of the first five year plan — Recommendations on behalf of the agricultural workers — communicated.

GOVERNMENT OF MADRAS.
ABSTRACT.

Labour - Agricultural - Labour - Reorganisation of - Draft outline of the first five year plan - Recommendations - on behalf of the agricultural worker - Communicated.

- -

Development Department

G.O.Ms.No.4174. Dated 19th September 1951.
Read the following:-

From the Government of India, Ministry of Labour,
No.A.L.56, dated 9.8.1951.

O R D E R:

Copy of the letter cited from the Government of India. Ministry of Labour with its enclosure is communicated to the Commissioner of Labour, Board of Revenue, Director of Agriculture, Registrar of Cooperative Societies and the Director, Harijan Welfare, Madras for information.

(By Order of etc.)

J.M.Lobo Prabu,
Secretary to Government.

To
The Commissioner of Labour, Madras.
To The Board of Revenue.
To The Director of Agriculture.
To The Registrar of Cooperative Societies.
To the Director of Harijan Welfare, Madras.
To The Revenue Department.
To The Food and Agriculture (Food Production) Department.
To The Rural Welfare Department.

/True copy/

R Nagarajan 26-9-51

SUPERINTENDENT,
Madras Record Office,
Madras.

gh.24.9.

83 24/9

Copy of letter No.A.L.56, dated 9th August 1951 from the Government of India, Ministry of Labour, New Delhi, to All State Governments.

Sub: Agricultural Labour.

...

I am directed to forward an extract entitled 'The Agricultural Worker', from the Draft Outline of the First Five year Plan dealing with the Reorganisation of Agriculture, in which certain recommendations have been made on behalf of the agricultural worker, for the information of the State Government.

THE AGRICULTURAL WORKER.

Agricultural Workers constitute about a third of the rural population. In the past insufficient attention has been given to their social and economic well-being. The tenancy and other legislation enacted in recent years does not to any significant extent bear upon their problems. A very large proportion of agricultural workers belong to the scheduled castes and, in a real sense, the main economic problem of this section of the population can only be solved if the land system provides increasing opportunity to the agricultural worker. The growing pressure of population causes greater hardship to agricultural labourers than to any other group in rural society. The great majority among them continue to eke out a bare existence. With agriculture organised at present, the under employment of agricultural workers and the lack of continuous work are chronic and they are the first victims of any undue rise in prices or of shortage of food and in rural agreas. The Agricultural Labour Enquiry which has been in progress for the past two years had produced a wealth of information about the condition of the agricultural labourer which should help in the formulation of appropriate policy.

It is not always realised that the existence of a large body of workers who have little to lose and live in indefensible social and economic conditions is itself a strong justification for effecting, as early as may be possible, radical changes in the structure of the rural economy. For, it is because agriculture as an industry is inefficient and cannot offer continuous work even to the agricultural producer that under the present conditions the scope for improving the condition of the agricultural worker is extremely small, It is to be expected that with the growth of Cooperative Village Management, as the responsibility of the village community towards all its members is translated into practical action the relative status of the agricultural worker will improve and fuller employment, whether as a farm worker or otherwise, will become available. In the meantime, steps in four directions are recommended:-

(i) The minimum Wages Act which was passed in 1948 has to be enforced in the first instance in those areas in which the level of rural wages is found to be relatively low. States Governments should take early steps to determine the low-wage pockets in their territories and should fix suitable minimum wages, care being taken to provide also the requisite administrative machinery;

(2) Minimum wages should also be prescribed for workers engaged on farms above a certain size. This may be

P.T.O.

broadly the size fixed for Registered Farms. On these farms, since agriculture will be organised on a commercial basis, it should be possible out of the proceeds to pay a reasonable wage to the worker. It may be expected that without making it necessary for a State Government to enforce minimum wages throughout its territory, the level of wages determined for Registrered Farms will influence wages in the surrounding areas. This selective approach may achieve in large part the purpose of universal enforcement of minimum agricultural wages throughout a State. Such universal enforcement by itself represents an administrative task which is at present beyond the capacity of the machinery at the disposal of Government and may tend to reduce the volume of rural employment to the immediate detriment of the agricultural worker;

(3) In the settlement of all newly reclaimed land, after allowing for such area as may be required for State farms, preference should be given to cooperatives consisting of landless workers;

(4) A progressive social welfare policy designed to imporve the living conditions and social status of the agricultural labourer should be followed. In particular, in matter such as allotment of residential sites in villages, supply of drinking water, etc. Beneficial legislation like the Debt Conciliation Act which at present applies only to persons holding land should also be made applicable to him under suitable conditions. Restrictions which still fetter the agricultural labourer in many parts of the country should be removed, wherever necessary, by legislation. Further, through stipends and larger opportunities for vocational education and training, it should be the State's endeavour to produce among agricultural labourers the type of leadership and the level of understanding of the needs of the village community as a whole without which reorganisation of the rural economy on lines described in this chapter may meet serious difficulty.

/True copy/

gh.24,9.